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**COMPARISON OF TEXTS OF THE FORMER CZ
DISSENT AND US UNDERGROUND MOVEMENTS**

Andrea Stimpson

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Vedoucí práce:

Ing. et BcA. Milan Kohout

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracoval(a) samostatně a použil(a) jen uvedených
pramenů a literatury.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this work are to compare the main 'underground' movements in the United States of America with the 'dissent' in the former Czechoslovakia. We would concentrate on the time period after the World War II as this is considered the beginning of modern underground movements. The first part of the work is devoted to clarifying the terms 'underground movement' and 'dissent movement' plus the determination of the key players in the United States and in Czechoslovakia, organizations and the most influential personalities.

The terminology was used in compliance with sources of the particular texts used in this work and after a kind recommendation of a member of both, American and Czechoslovakian, 'underground' movements, Milan Kohout.

In the second part we would provide materials related to the different 'underground' movements in the USA, the third part would be devoted to the Czechoslovakian 'dissent' and its main protagonists; Martin Luther King, Malcolm X or Students for Democratic Society for the human rights movements and Nancy Frazer for feminist movement would represent the American 'underground' and Egon Bondy, Vaclav Havel or Martin Jirous the Czechoslovakian 'underground' and 'dissent'. The works of the authors and manifestos of either of the movements will be abundantly cited to give authentic views of the texts which should also contribute to individual discoveries about the used language and style.

In the end the main ideas will be summarized by pointing out similarities and the main differences between the American 'underground' movement and Czechoslovakian 'dissent'.

As the underground phenomenon appears in a form of some kind of revolt against the common principles, social and political issues, the aim here was also to provide brief illustration of the then local and even global affairs. 'Underground' movements arise from unsatisfactory solutions of the socially hot issues, so knowledge of the political background is essential. The combination of historical facts with extracts and analysis of the authentic texts is provided, as mentioned above, in order to help a reader to empathize with the spirit of the 'underground' culture.

2. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO 'UNDERGROUND' AND 'DISSENT' CULTURE

2.1. How to understand the terms 'underground' and 'dissent'?

What can we consider an 'underground' or 'dissent' movement? What is the difference between the term 'underground' and 'dissent'? Even though the terms might seem to be identical, there are slight differences which would be better to explain in more detail.

'Underground' is classified as a movement or a group organized in secrecy among citizens especially in an occupied country for maintaining communication, popular solidarity, and concerted resistive action pending liberation, it is synonymous to the word 'resistance'.¹ 'Dissent' is a kind of public disagreement, expression of nonconformity, political opposition to a government or its policies. When we look into a dictionary we can find synonyms, which can help us to relatively easily imagine, what we are going to talk about in the next chapters: clash, collision, argument, disagreement, fight, disharmoniousness, antagonism.²

As we can see, both terms and their meanings could be perceived as very similar. Milan Kohout, active member of the Czech 'underground', professor at the American TUFTS University, New England Institute of Art and University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czech Republic, defines terms 'the first culture' and 'the second culture' which

¹ *Underground*. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/underground> [Retrieved February 12, 2016].

² *Dissent*. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dissent> [Retrieved February 12, 2016].

were driven from his experience of being member of the Czechoslovakian, then American 'underground'. As the 'first culture' is understood to be the main stream of the 'politically and socially correct' popular culture commonly presented in media for the broad masses. The 'second culture' is on the contrary a culture out of the main stream, it is often critical about the political, social and economic system of the particular state. According to Milan Kohout, the 'dissent' and 'underground' are branches of the 'second culture', whereas 'dissent' is a matter of mainly intellectuals, artists, philosophers (we can mention names such as Vaclav Havel, Egon Bondy or Dana Nemcova), while underground includes all the 'second culture' members ranking from factory workers to musicians, who did not necessarily have sound titles but often reached a high level of general knowledge due to their self-education. The strict definition of both terms is a subject of many debates, but we will perceive them as synonyms in this work as the lines between them are still not clearly determined.

When we simplify the available definitions, we can say with a certainty, that it would be all the politically oppositional, personally expressive movements which provoke social or cultural changes in all either positive or negative aspects. Or we can use terms of the leader of the Czechoslovakian 'Second Wave Underground Movement' Martin Jirous who describes 'underground' culture as a movement which:

“represents the spiritual position of intellectuals and artists who consciously and critically confront the world in which they live. It is a declaration of war against the establishment, against things as they are. It is a movement that operates primarily with artistic means, even though its

representatives are conscious of the fact that art is not and should not be the end-all of an artist's effort. The underground produces people who understand that by relying on so-called legal means, nothing can be changed and so they do not even try to become part of the "legal" establishment."³

The fact should be stretched here, that the Czechoslovakian 'underground' was meant as an apolitical movement and the battle with the government was only one-sided. That means government was permanently punishing the participants for wanting to live their own culture. The culture in the Czechoslovakian totalitarian system was strictly dictated so the government considered every attempt on self-expression a rebellion.

To sum up, the underground involves all the movements which are against or existing along the main stream culture and which are very often pushed out of legality by the government. In America, and even globally, where such movements were often taken as political opponents of the Establishment. Examples of the movements were noted in the world history. We can mention the revolutions in 1848 in Europe, in the 1920s in Russia or the international stir in the 1960s and 1970s.

³ HOPTMAN, L. J., & POSPISZYL, T. *Primary documents: A sourcebook for Eastern and Central European art since 1950s*, 2002.

2.2. The Direction and Function of the 'Underground' Media

This work will be aimed on the period mentioned last and we will focus on less conventional alternative media causing not only positive but also a negative pressure in the society. Such a media could concern constructive approach but also negative forces like fundamentalism or racism, whose ideologies can take society more backwards than forward. The direction and function of the 'underground' media is well depicted in the following description:

“... radical alternative media generally serve two overriding purposes: (a) to express opposition vertically from subordinate quarters directly at the power structure and against its behaviour; (b) to build support, solidarity, and networking laterally against policies or even against the very survival of the power structure. In any given instance, both vertical and lateral purposes may be involved”.⁴

When the 'underground' movement gains popularity with the public and becomes a social movement it gains the power to change the order of things in the certain state. It is possible to classify three possible types of social movements. The first model is an uncontrolled mass public activism, powered by emotions which leads more or less to a general chaos, the second type on the contrary involves rational collective actions like strikes, sit-ins, demonstrations or traffic blocking. The third model, called academically 'New Social Movements' (NSMs) are connected with ecological, feminist or peace-

⁴

DOWNING, J. *Radical media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*, 2001.

oriented social movements.⁵ The question is which of these types is the most efficient. The first model could express the outrage or indignation of the masses with a certain strategy that government is performing. Without planning this model is not effective from the long-term perspective, because it actually does not set up the objectives and is lacking of constructive organization. The main purpose of such an action is to draw attention to the certain topic and force government into changes. The second model is more likely to achieve changes as the long-term strategies are clearly defined. It is possible to mention here the actions like the series of sit-ins in America, pointing out the racial issues in 1950s and 1960s, thanks to which was The Civil Rights Act in 1964, which legally ended the racial segregation on the American territory, and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, enabling the equal approach to the voting rights were adopted to the American Constitution. The third media seems to be well organized movements with whole long-term programs and clearly set objectives, like e.g. Greenpeace.

5 COHEN, J. L., & ARATO, A. *Civil Society and Political Theory*, 1997.

2.3. Blending of the 'Underground' with the Main Stream Culture

As it was mentioned earlier, the 'underground' movements are often against the main stream media, which is usually much larger. Nevertheless, even the main popular culture could be infected by the underground. As a good example could be the case of the anarchist Abbie Hoffman, who published and widely distributed his book "*Steal the book*", teaching people how to stop the growing power of the US corporations and survive in the 'underground', or the 1970s television series 'Roots' concerning the racial theme.⁶ Stating this, we have to note here that blending of the underground with the main stream culture was possible only in the US environment. It was unthinkable in the Czechoslovakian environment where 'the first' and 'second culture' were strictly separated and the 'underground' would never be presented in the 'first culture' media. That means no member of the 'underground' could appear on the television broadcast and his work would never be officially published. The Czechoslovakian 'underground' was not trying to overthrow the government or gain the major support of the masses, they wanted to gain a free space for their style of living, for their culture.

These days, the public could be stoked by alternative media by means of relatively young types of the 'underground' activities and that would be graffiti and street art. Even here it is visible how 'underground' culture can penetrate the main stream. As a great example we can use work of the contemporary street artist Shepard Fairey whose stickers were used in Barrack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign.

⁶ DOWNING, J. *Radical media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*, 2001.

The audience plays an important role in any culture and with the progress in technologies it is easier and easier to deliver the message to the audience through the Internet social networks or for example at a television debate. Using media in spreading the alternative ideas this way can resemble advertising strategies and could be very effective. The goal of the alternative media surely is to gain the attention of the public, to encourage masses to take action, go in the streets and change the 'advertised' issue. It is necessary to be reminded here, that such 'advertising' is crucial in the American 'underground' as information spreads there rather 'vertically', that means each person has to receive the message individually (each has to buy the book), while in the Czechoslovakian 'underground' information was shared from hand to hand, mouth to mouth 'horizontally' (a book would be passed from one member to the other).⁷

Having mentioned the general information on the topic of 'underground' cultures we can move on now to the main body of this work, which is the analysis and comparison of texts coming from the American 'underground' movements and the Czechoslovakian 'dissent'.

⁷ FRANKLIN, DAVID, & KOHOUT. MILAN. *Position and Relation: Spatial Meanings. In A. C. (Ed.), Seenography Essays on the Meaning of Visuality in Performance Events* (First ed.: 107-127), 2014.

3. THE 'UNDERGROUND' MOVEMENTS IN THE USA

For better understanding of the situation, description of which is provided in this part of the work we will have a closer look at the political background on which the modern 'underground' movements started to grow and we will also try to relate the ideas mentioned in the texts to the appropriate situations.

The main stream of the American 'underground' movement could be considered to be the relatively recent resistance of the discriminated against African-Americans by the 'white government' in 1960s, closely related to it the movement against the breaking of human rights on the territory of the USA, but also concerning the wars the USA was involved in, like the wars in Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea and Iraq. It would also be contributive to mention the 'consciousness-rising' women's suffrage movement. We would cite here works of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X for the African-American movements, Abbie Hoffman for socialist anarchist movement or Nancy Fraser for the women's rights movement.

3.1. Escalation of the 'Underground' Movements in the USA

The main period which is perceived as the peak of the underground movements in the USA, and also internationally, are the two decades of 1960s and 1970s. At this time the anti-racist movements, anti-capitalistic movements and movements for the human rights generally intensified. What was the cause? When we have a closer look at the social and political issues we can recall following events, important for development of

the underground movements: the stormy 1960s were started by continuous 'sit-in protests' against the racial segregation, was continued by the 'freedom rides' gaining the public attention due to the violation towards the riders, activities of doctor Martin Luther King aimed at the equality of races and escalation of police brutality, assassination of the change-bringing president J. F. Kennedy in Texas, after which The Civil Rights Act was finally signed by the new President Lyndon Johnson, stating the war in Vietnam, the Race Riots in Harlem, the arrest of 800 university students in California in 1964 when protesting against breaking of human rights in America and Vietnam, imprisonment of South African anti-apartheid revolutionary Nelson Mandela (who had a strong relationship to revolutionaries such as Che Guevara or Fidel Castro), Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr receives the Nobel Peace Prize awarding his efforts in the non-violent fight against racism in the USA, civil rights workers disappeared during their investigation of violence by the Ku Klux Klan, China explodes its first Nuclear bomb in 1964.

American women did not stay behind and in 1965 the 'National Organization for Women' was found to protect not only women's rights but also to join the fight for the civil rights and took part in anti-war protests. All these protests resulted in social reforms known under the name 'Great Society legislation', released by the administration of the democrat president Lyndon Johnson. The reforms touched the poverty, pool rights, education. The poverty decreased by 9% from 1960 to 1969, but the Johnson's administration spent twenty times more to finance the war against communism in Vietnam. The lack of the activity from the side of government to sort out the racial issues, never ending war in Vietnam, the growing violence at the anti-racial protests and general inability of the US government to change the bureaucratic system then contributed to the

development of the radical movements like the Students for Democratic Society (SDS), Freedom Riders, The Black Panthers, The George Jackson Brigade, The Nation of Islam and others.⁸

There were many other political and social issues which stirred public opinion. The cocktail of these caused massive organized movements which protested against the government strategy. The movements were strictly aimed on changes in jurisdiction or the state system itself, they wanted to finish the wars. In the next chapters we would mention at least the most visible and influential movements and leaders and share some of their major ideas.

3.2 The Freedom Riders

The year 1961 in North Carolina could show one incident of African – Americans and white supremacists after another. The members of Afro-American movement for the civil rights 'Freedom Riders' were beaten and arrested on a regular basis when they tried to protest peacefully against the unequal conditions of African-Americans and the white American population. The previous and continuous activities of the Ku Klux Klan taught them to use guns to protect themselves. They were supported by Malcolm X: "*the fiery minister of the Nation of Islam's No. 7 mosque in Harlem*".⁹ The leader of the Carolina

⁸ American History. <https://www.usa.gov/history> [Retrieved March 1, 2016].

⁹ BURTON-ROSE, D. *Guerilla USA: The George Jackson Brigade and the Anticapitalist Underground of the 1970s*, 2010.

'Freedom Riders' was Robert Williams who influenced the 1960s 'Black Power movement'. Despite the violence caused by his organization he never wanted to destroy America, on the contrary to the 'George Jackson Brigade' which we would mention in the next chapter. He aimed mainly at keeping the promise of equality given by the Constitution.

The federal government was a bit too benevolent to the civil rights struggle in the South in 1960s, but they started to show interest the moment the students from the organization "Students for Democratic Society (SDS) brought the campaign to the North.

Under the influence of the communist revolutions in China, Cuba and Vietnam, the black radical movement started massive riots, firstly in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963 and two years later in South Central Los Angeles resulting in 34 people killed, over a thousand wounded and thousands more arrested. According to a magazine Scanlan's there were 546 similar actions in the second half of the 1960s.¹⁰

Because there was nothing achieved by the peaceful protests of the anti-war movement, dissidents decided to start the active resistance against the government. At this moment the Afro-American segments, who were not interested in the peaceful protests, joined the Civil rights movement.

In 1968 student demonstrations, sit-ins and strikes arose, inspired by the revolutionary Che Guevara's (who was executed in Bolivia in 1967 leading the guerilla war against the local oppressors). The actions were brutally suppressed by the police

¹⁰ Ibid.

forces and the assassination of the leader of non-violent African-American movement Martin Luther King in 1968 and sudden violent death of the president J. F. Kennedy, who was ready for dialogue concerning civil rights (regarding interests of the economic elite, whose image was badly damaged by the US racial stir though), only intensified the resistance as both men were for rioting Americans a lost chance for a peaceful change. The same year the American 'counterculture', among them Tom Hayden, decided to organize a 'life festival' in Chicago in a protest against the Vietnamese war. They intended to create a new world existing parallel to the one they complained about, but were brutalized by the police again. *“Protesters cast 'Chicago' as the domestic equivalent of the suppression of that year's Prague Spring. Lame-duck President Lyndon B. Johnson was likened to the Soviet leader Leonid Breznev, who, only days before Chicago counter-convention began, ordered in troops to crush a democratic flowering in Czechoslovakia.*

¹¹ The events in Chicago caused many of the anti-war movements, e.g. a faction of 'SDS' called 'Weathermen', to want to militarize and started the resistance in the way the communist movements e.g. in China, Cambodia or Vietnam did – by the active fighting. The fight was intensified by the violent riots and domestic bombings.

3.3 The George Jackson Brigade of 1970s

The 'George Jackson Brigade' tried to encourage the revolution by the bombing attacks mainly on the government institutions. The peculiarity about this movement is that its members actually spent more time in prison cells than outside. The organization

¹¹ Ibid.

had seven members, five white, one African-American. The members were gay or bisexual, that means they were actually unique from the point of separatism of the movements of that time. The revolutionary group was named after the 'Black Panthers' member George Jackson who was shot during his attempted escape from prison in 1971. Because they could not see any progress on the field of the civil rights issues proceeding peacefully, they decided to use violence to forward the required changes and reach their political ideal and social system – communism. Their acts involved not only the above mentioned bombing, but also sets of bank robberies and attacks against the court houses, public utilities and also the correction facilities. In their active years, between 1975 and 1978 they robbed 16 banks and bombed 15 institutions. According to an agent of the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation):

“Unlike other recent student-revolutionary groups, the GJB does not envision itself as an 'elite' faction that will provide a leadership faction for an ultimate revolutionary government, and criticizes those groups who would place themselves in such a role. Rather GJB sees itself more as a catalyst to make the masses aware of their oppressed state, and inspire them to create their own general uprising to overthrow their oppressors.”

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3.4 Abbie Hoffman and the Anarchist Approach of the Youth International Party

Abbie Hoffman was an American political activist who concentrated on the civil rights movement and protest actions against the war in Vietnam. He was an organizer of the Youth International Party, so called 'Yippies'. His absurd humour gained him a great popularity even in the main stream culture and in the year 2000 the film about his life “*Steal This Movie*” was released, depicting besides other things the 'Chicago Festival of Life' in 1968 and the following Chicago 'Seven trial' accusing the leaders, including Hoffman, of the rioting at the Democratic convention. The peaceful festival was meant to highlight the failings of the dominant social order in America and the government-approved killing in Vietnam, but ended up in a bloody conflict with the police.

*"It is summer. It is the last week in August, and the NATIONAL DEATH PARTY meets to bless Lyndon Johnson. We are there! There are 50,000 of us dancing in the streets, throbbing with amplifiers and harmony. We are making love in the parks. We are reading, singing, laughing, printing newspapers, groping, and making a mock convention, and celebrating the birth of FREE AMERICA in our own time."*¹³

The idea of such festivals was there in Czechoslovakia too, the cultural events were organized by people around the musical group 'Plastic People of the Universe'. The idea was different though. It was not so much about revolutionary anti-political acts, it was more a meeting for purposes of art. People wanted to share their aesthetic principles,

¹³ LINDER O. D. *An Account of the Chicago Seven Conspiracy Trial of 1969-70*. <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/Chicago7/Account.html> [April 10, 2016].

read poems, listen to music and make art. It was not a political demonstration at all. Also at the Chicago demonstration poems were read and people meditated in the park, but it seemed to be, besides massive disagreement with the Establishment policy, a kind of promotion of the possible new life standards in a big style. The end was similar, differing just in ratio proportionate to the sizes of both countries. The end of one of the festivals organized by members of the Czechoslovakian 'underground' was described by Milan Kohout as follows:

*“Some of us are taken to the interrogation, at which we are giggling as we know well that our interrogators and the coppers are wretches, who don't have a chance to stop the spread of the 'second culture', because it will run through their fingers as water to another island, where they will have to paddle to and all covered in sweat confiscate loads and loads more pieces of art, which is at this particular moment being stuck in endless duplications on the trees of another island, island of the free thinking.”*¹⁴

Hoffman was the author and also publisher of the book *“Steal the book”*, which addressed the masses with a de facto survival manual for anarchists. The book provides methods of fighting the government and corporations by starting a new style of living. The book consists of three main parts. In the first chapter are detailed instructions how to obtain 'free' food, travel, accommodation, the second part is about equipment needed for demonstrations, how to make a home-made bombs and even the legal advice for the

¹⁴ KOHOUT MILAN. *Proved' vola světem, volem zůstane*, 2010. Transl. author.

counter-fighters in trouble. In the third chapter there are drafts of the new society in Chicago, New York and other major cities of the USA. Even though the book was rejected by many publishers (in the end Hoffman had to print it himself) and book shop keepers, the book became a bestseller. Hoffman reacted to it with his typical sense of humour: *"It's embarrassing when you try to overthrow the government and you wind up on the Best Seller's List."*¹⁵ We can use this moment as a reminder of one of the main differences between the US and Czechoslovakian underground. As we mentioned earlier, in the Czechoslovakia of that time it was unthinkable for members of the 'second culture' to legally present their texts and, even more, to get to the 'Best Seller's List'. We can remember here the Czech author Bohumil Hrabal, who was initially a member of the 'second culture', but in the moment his work was officially published, financially rewarded, became the 'main stream' author. The Czechoslovakian underground was strictly distanced from economic issues as its members' philosophy was to make art for art sake without a bigger interest to influence masses and convince them to accept their way of life. By contrast, American 'second culture' was never completely separated from the main stream and its economic and political points of view.

Coming back to Hoffman's publication *"Steal the book"* we can provide a few examples of the practical directions of the book which for example encourage Americans to set their own broadcast media and support the guerrilla actions: *"Guerrilla theatre events are always good news items and if done right, people will remember them forever. Throwing out money at the Stock Exchange or dumping soot on executives at Con Edison*

¹⁵ HOFFMAN, ABBIE, IZAK HABER, AND BERT COHEN. *Steal This Book*, 1996.

*or blowing up the policeman statue in Chicago immediately conveys an easily understood message by using the technique of creative disruption.”*¹⁶

Another part of Hoffman's book concerns the detailed advice on how to gain welfare benefits: *“Have your heaviest story ready to ooze out. If you have no physical disabilities, lay down a 'mentally deranged' rap. Getting medical papers saying you have any long-term illness or defect helps a lot. Tell the caseworker you get dizzy spells on the job and faint in the street. Keep bobbing your head, yawning, or scratching.”*¹⁷

Similar tendencies could be seen here as those in the Czechoslovakian dissent movement, the picture of the welfare revolutionaries resemble the characters from the Egon Bondy's cult book *“The Invalid Siblings”*. While Hoffman encourages to use the welfare system to show the absurdity, commercialism and consumerism of the American system, in the Czechoslovakian 'underground' the welfare support was the only certain way of surviving as its members were pushed to the edge of society and they could get only the second-rate jobs. Icon of the Czechoslovakian 'second culture' Egon Bondy states in his book *“Invalid Siblings”* that the intellectuals are the motor of the society and their role is *“to maintain in organism of society certain indispensable ideological even potentially revolutionary tensions”* at least till the time society reaches *“due to a well supplying economy a new relative social balance”* which causes that *“the ferment is suddenly defunct and becomes a threat for not only its ruling garniture but the society itself.”* *“The intelligence elite”*, as he marks the main stream personalities, is deeply dependent on economic and social prestige and therefore are absolutely devoted to the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

ruling garniture and corrupted by its money and statuses. The independent intellectuals are not needed in society any more, so they slowly become 'invalid pensioners'¹⁸ - people pushed by the society from the public light. In practice these intellectuals were put on welfare (often for mental disabilities) or employed as boiler-men, hotel maintenance, alternatively in scrapyards. Some of them were enabled to emigrate. This option was the smoothest operation the government would use to silence them up.

The rebellious groups In America and Czechoslovakia fought the rotten systems not only actively, but also by means of passive resistance. Actually, we can say that the Czechoslovakian 'dissent' was mostly outlined by the passive resistance and, in comparison with the American 'underground', strictly rejecting any violence.

3.5 Students for Democratic Society (SDS)

Another type of the 'American Civil Rights Movement' was the organization 'Students for Democratic Society (SDS)' founded in 1959. 'SDS' operated under the principles of the "*Port Huron Statement*", a manifest written by Tom Hayden and its president Robert Alan Haber. Their main strategies were for changes in the American educational system, to end the war in Vietnam, the Cold War and to solve the race discrimination problem.¹⁹

¹⁸ BONDY, EGON. *Invalidní sourozenci*. 4. vyd., 2012. Transl. author.

¹⁹ *Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)*. (n.d.). [http://www.britannica.com/topic/Students for a Democratic Society](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Students%20for%20a%20Democratic%20Society) [Retrieved April 09, 2016].

Their manifest points out the rigidity of the governmental policies, manipulation of the masses by politicians, growing consumerism and apathy of the US citizens, who are giving up their personal responsibility and creativity at solving problems. They criticize big corporations for incessantly increasing hunger for profit, selfishness and losing the national ethic:

*“The apathy here is, first, subjective – the felt powerlessness of ordinary people, the resignation before the enormity of events. But subjective apathy is encouraged by the objective American situation – the actual structural separation of people from power, from relevant knowledge, from the pinnacles of decision-making. Just as the university influences the student way of life, so do major social institutions create the circumstances in which the isolated citizen will try helplessly to understand his world and himself.”*²⁰

It is possible to stop here for a moment and compare, again, the ideas from American 'underground' with the ideas expressed in the Czechoslovakian 'dissent'. The dissident and future Czechoslovakian president Vaclav Havel expresses the cost of living in the socialistic state as follows:

“... it offers an immediately available home: all one has to do is accept it, and suddenly everything becomes clear once more, life takes on new meaning, and all mysteries, unanswered questions, anxiety, and loneliness vanish. Of course, one pays dearly for this low-rent home: the

²⁰

HAYDEN, TOM, & HABER ROBERT ALAN. *Port Huron Statement*. 1962.

*price is abdication of one's own reason, conscience, and responsibility, for an essential aspect of this ideology is the consignment of reason and conscience to a higher authority."*²¹

It is obvious that although the systems in both cultures were considered anti-poles (capitalism versus 'attempt for communism'), the feelings towards the loss of responsibility and comfortable pass of the power to the ruling garniture remained similar. It almost seems like the manner the masses were manipulated in the communistic Eastern Block were practiced in the Western Block too. The first under the head of socialism, the second under the head of capitalism. People were offered relative comfort and security for the cost of their own opinions and creativity. Under this light then all the Cold War business seems to be an artificially created source of tension to keep people occupied and employ their minds so their attention is not aware of the growing power of their own garniture consisting of a few 'powerful' who play their own power games based mainly on possession. Fear from communism on the side of American population (we should say here mainly that of the American government) and ideologically spread aversion to capitalism on the side of the Czechoslovakian socialist government were the breeding grounds for the 'underground' movement on both sides. The 'underground' was searching for answers and it generally tried to raise the public awareness towards the hot political and social issues - Egon Bondy²² by his fiction, which was actually beautifully describing the then social order, and Hoffman by his provocative manifestations, which, again, would be unthinkable in the Czechoslovakian conditions. The Czechoslovakian 'dissent'

²¹ HAVEL, VÁCLAV. *The Power of the Powerless*. 1978

²² A Czechoslovakian philosopher, the icon of the Czechoslovakian 'underground'

chose the peaceful, we can say artistic and almost poetic way. (We will not talk here about the borders of the poetics as the lines are for each individual are very specific).

Anyway, coming back to the “*Port Huron Statement*” we should not forget to quote some shocking figures, which were via this document offered to the public, concerning the US military industry, with a strong argument playing in favour of the underground organizations aimed mainly at the military conflicts, as 'SDS' indisputably was. It shows that the product from the military industry significantly supports the national budget and investments into it are higher than into the American welfare system:

*“The politicians, of course, take the line of least resistance and thickest support: warfare, instead of welfare, is easiest to stand up for: after all, the Free World is at stake (and our constituency's investments, too)... Business and politics, when significantly militarized, affect the whole living condition of each American citizen. Worker and family depend on the Cold War for life. Half of all research and development is concentrated on military ends.”*²³

Similar aversion to the militarized business is shown in the Egon Bondy's work “*Invalid Siblings*”. In his vision the world is being built up and repeatedly destroyed by the 'brass heads', who lead wars from their comfortable offices driving humankind towards the apocalyptic end. When another bombing of the last piece of land in the world has finished, the main character, a philosopher A (Bondy himself) talks to a revolutionary

²³

HAYDEN, TOM, & HABER ROBERT ALAN. *Port Huron Statement*. 1962.

leader Lev Davidovic, who wants a radical solution to overthrow the 'brass heads', even at a cost of violence, unsuccessfully searching for sufficient support:

*“I guess they whacked up of all the stock gathered in years and they have munition just enough for one last blow. And then they will tell them to crawl out and start the joyful building again and they will stay in that joyfulness another 25 years, till they will have to blow it up all again. This shit-humankind lost the capability to do that your imperialistic blood bath a long time ago – and actually there is nobody who would really want it any more...”*²⁴

The powerlessness above influencing the strategies of the governing elite is felt in Bondy's text, apathy and lack of interest to change the order of things, because humankind is lost anyway. The American text is on contrary full of energy, pointing out issues contradicting the original American principles of freedom and independence and encouraging Americans to change their ways of life.

The “*Huron Manifest*” clearly states the main points of the program of renewing American society. The program includes topics like finishing the Cold War, giving people back their dignity and creativeness, reforming of health and education systems, making corporations publicly responsible or promotion of the peaceful dissent as means of creativity.

²⁴

BONDY, EGON. *Invalidní sourozenci*. 2012. Transl. author.

*“The United States' principal goal should be creating a world where hunger, poverty, disease, ignorance, violence and exploitation are replaced as central features by abundance, reason, love, and international cooperation.”*²⁵

Reading *“The Manifest”* we can sense an inclination of the authors to the ideology of communism in its clearest form. It would probably be interesting for them to read Vaclav Havel's essay, where the real attempt for communism is described as a dictatorial system, where *“abundance, reason and love”* are determined by the total obedience to the system.²⁶ We can cite here Havel's work at the moment he describes one of the common situations in the socialistic Czechoslovakia:

“The manager of a fruit-and-vegetable shop places in his window, among the onions and carrots, the slogan: 'Workers of the world, unite!' Why does he do it?...That poster was delivered to our greengrocer from the enterprise headquarters along with the onions and carrots... He does it because these things must be done if one is to get along in life...Verbally, it might be expressed this way: 'I, the greengrocer XY, live here and I know what I must do. I behave in the manner expected of me. I can be depended upon and am beyond reproach. I am obedient and therefore I have the right to be left in peace.' This message, of course, has an addressee: it is directed above, to the greengrocer's superior, and at the same time it is a shield that protects the greengrocer from potential informers. The slogan's

²⁵ HAYDEN, TOM, & HABER ROBERT ALAN. *Port Huron Statement*. 1962.

²⁶ HAVEL, VACLAV. *The Power of the Powerless*, 1978

*real meaning, therefore, is rooted firmly in the greengrocer's existence. It reflects his vital interests.”*²⁷

It clearly shows that brainwashing was common not only in America, as was mentioned in the “*Huron Manifest*” earlier, but also in Czechoslovakia. We can again think about key differences in American capitalistic and Czechoslovakian socialistic systems. The principles of power are resembling each other.

Provoked by the start of the Vietnamese war in April 1965 'SDS' organized the first mass anti-government protest. The students wanted to show their resistance towards the US government, which allowed breaking the human rights not only in their home country but also abroad. Because the peaceful way of the protests, which were increasingly violated by the police forces, did not bring the expected effects, 'SDS' members split into several factions. One of the most noticeable was 'Weathermen', whose leader became Tom Hayden and which diverged from the peaceful protest to violent tactics. 'SDS' was active till the end of the Vietnam War in the mid-1970 and was then dissolved.

On the base of the provided data we can say that the program of the American 'SDS' had a lot in common with the ideas of the Czechoslovakian 'underground'. Both movements were aware of the power of ruling garnitures above the citizens of both countries, they could see the manipulation sweetened by the blinding treats in form of free housing in Czechoslovakia or by creating the welfare state in America. The major discrepancies were in a way of reaching their goals. The aim of Czechoslovakian 'second

²⁷ Ibid.

culture' was to create free space for its members, their culture, to ensure that human rights are provided and to lead the state towards democracy, while the 'SDS' was ready to fight the system, influenced by the world's communistic revolutions and change the industrial capitalism into a more human form of social organization.

3.6 Martin Luther King and his Peaceful Solution

Talking about the most influential figures of the American underground we have to mention the most successful fighter for human rights, mainly the rights of African Americans Dr. Martin Luther King Junior. His famous speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington “*I had a Dream*” was encouraging people to forget the injustice of the past and fight for their rights not by means of violence but means of soul: “*Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.*”²⁸ In the speech there was a warning against the movement of radical Malcolm X, we would talk about in the next chapter, as King points out: “*The marvellous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their*

²⁸

KING, M. L., JR. *I Had a Dream Speech*. 1963

*destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.”*²⁹

Martin Luther King Junior established communication with the then American government lead by President Kennedy and, as it is believed, his activities were perceived as a source of later changes in American Constitution. Therefore it is, again, disputable whether he was a member of 'the second' or the 'first culture'. His civilized and intellectual approach resembles the character of Vaclav Havel as well as the ideas of humanism, connection to the 'first culture' and media - in the case of Havel just till the time he publicly criticized the injustice in the process with 'Plastic People of the Universe' and was removed from the 'first culture' as will be explained later. Havel's ideas concerned all the human beings and were not aimed at the racial issues for the obvious reasons. There were hardly any people with a different colour of skin in the then Czechoslovakia. The situation in America as a country built up on slavery of African Americans was, and still is, diametrically different. King longed for the free minded country with equal opportunities as he expressed in the end of his speech: *“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.”*³⁰

The strong personality of Martin Luther King would deserve more space here, but as mentioned before it is disputable whether he was a member of the underground or the first culture for his cooperation with the US Establishment, however he influenced the underground movements.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

3.7 Vision of Changes through the Eyes of Malcolm X

The anti-pole of the peaceful way of resistance presented by Martin Luther King were activities of the radical leader Malcolm X from the 'Nation of Islam', a movement which combined Islam with a black nationalism. Except the religious beliefs (King was a Christian while Malcolm X inclined to Islam) the main difference between them was in the method in which the resistance should be performed. Malcolm X preached in Harlem, a major African-American centre in New York, and actually urged the violence towards the white Americans as means for changes in society and we could often hear him criticize white government, Christians and his rivals. His ideas were presented by himself in the speech *"The Ballot or the Bullet"* given in the state of Ohio on April 3, 1964: "... *I myself am a minister, not a Christian minister, but a Muslim minister; and I believe in action on all fronts by whatever means necessary.*" ³¹

In the first part of the speech the struggling of the African-American population is emphasized and lack of practical progress on the field of race discrimination since the 'Abolition of Slavery' in 1865 criticized: *"No, I'm not an American. I'm one of the 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism. One of the 22 million black people who are the victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy. So, I'm not standing here speaking to you as an American, or a patriot, or a flag-saluter, or a flag-waver -- no, not I. I'm speaking as a victim of this American system. And I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare."* ³²

³¹ MALCOLM, X., *The Ballot or the Bullet speech*. 1964

³² Ibid.

Another issue criticized in his speech is American illusion of democracy and equal opportunities. As he points out, there is no need to make changes to the Constitution according to equal civil rights as: *“Being born here in America doesn't make you an American. Why, if birth made you American, you wouldn't need any legislation; you wouldn't need any amendments to the Constitution; you wouldn't be faced with civil-rights filibustering in Washington, D.C., right now. They don't have to pass civil-rights legislation to make a Polack an American.”*³³ This note seems to be reaction towards the preparation of the 'The Civil Rights Act' and 'The 24th Amendment to the Constitution' about the equal approach to the polls and Malcolm X's argumentation has to be confessed as truly conclusive.

His criticism of the U.S. system also touches the topic of ownership. Malcolm X emphasizes that black people had been contributing to the system a lot, they had been ready whenever 'Uncle Sam', a personification of the American government, wanted them to participate on all the military missions where the USA were involved, but without a major positive impact on the life standards of the black population. He sees that as an indefensible act of exploitation from the side of white population. In his speech he reminds us of the fact that America's success had been built up on slavery and hard work of the enslaved African population. That is one of the main arguments for his idea that people of America should be equal in wealth and civil rights:

„Your and my mother and father, who didn't work an eight-hour shift, but worked from "can't see" in the morning until "can't see" at night, and worked for nothing, making the white man rich, making Uncle Sam

³³

Ibid.

rich. This is our investment. This is our contribution, our blood... Three hundred and ten years we worked in this country without a dime in return - I mean without a dime in return. You let the white man walk around here talking about how rich this country is, but you never stop to think how it got rich so quick. It got rich because you made it rich. “³⁴

It is necessary to mention here, that soon after this speech, on July 2 1964, 'The Civil Rights Act' was finally signed by the new President Lyndon Johnson, who replaced the assassinated J. F. Kennedy. Malcolm X lost his popularity then when he released his controversial comments on the assassination of J. F. Kennedy. This speech caused his withdrawal from the 'Nation of Islam' and the fundamental disputes with the 'Nation' led to his assassination by its members in 1965.

³⁴

Ibid.

3.7 Feminist movement

The feminist movement broke up in the USA in the 1960s and 1970s when women started to realize that the fulfilment of their lives does not lie in boundless devotion to their husbands and decided to talk of the social and political issues, to study at universities and to fight the inequality in financial reward for their work, even for their right for controlled reproduction. They decided not to be only housewives and carriers of children, the women stood up for their rights as human entities with their own will. Behind this new trend stood Betty Friedan's book *"The Feminine Mystique"* where the desperate position of the American housewives was captured. We can cite here a part where Friedan interviews:

*"... a man who is paid approximately million dollars a year for his professional services in manipulating the emotions of American women to serve the needs of business: Properly manipulated (if you are not afraid of that word, he said), American housewives can be given the sense of identity, purpose, creativity, the self-realization even sexual joy they lack by the buying of things. I suddenly realized the significance of the boast that women wield seventy-five per cent of the purchasing power in America. I suddenly saw American women as victims of that ghastly gift, that power at the point of purchase. The insights he shared with me so liberally revealed many things."*³⁵

³⁵

FRIEDAN, BETTY. *The Feminine Mystique*. 1977

Friedan touches all the affairs influencing the lives of American women. From the mental problems caused by crises of their identity, abuse of women by business to the plans for their better future. She is stretching out the inequality between men and women:

“Some of us (in 1963, nearly half of all women in the United States) were already committing the unpardonable sin of working outside the home to help pay the mortgage or grocery bill. Those who did felt guilty, too – about betraying their femininity, undermining their husbands' masculinity, and neglecting their children by daring to work for money at all, no matter how much it was needed. They couldn't admit, even to themselves, that they resented being paid half what a man would have been paid for the job, or always being passed over for promotion, or writing the paper for which he got the degree and the rise.”³⁶

Talking here about the unsatisfactory situation of the American women, we shall compare this movement with the Czechoslovakians. Is there anything to compare when it comes to feminism in the former Czechoslovakia? There was no significant feminist movement in the socialist country. With the ideology, trying to make all the people living in the beginning communism equal, comes even the equality between men and women. It was expected for women there to work the same as men, no difference in professions. Women were presented as builders of the better future and their position was not so economically dependent on men like in the USA.

³⁶

Ibid.

Having touched the main streams of the American underground, it is possible to move on now to the former Czechoslovakia.

4. THE DISSENT MOVEMENT IN THE FORMER CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In the former Czechoslovakia we can talk about the dissident resistance in the socialist state, which was under the influence of the Soviet Union, suppressing freedom and human rights, fight for the freedom of speech, culture and ideology. Texts of such authors like Vaclav Havel, Egon Bondy, Ivan Martina Jirouse, Milan Kohout etc. will be shown in this theses as they can provide us with a clearer picture of the life from late 60s to late 80s in the former Czechoslovakia. Some of the authors were already mentioned in the previous chapters, but we still have a lot more to say here about their lives, philosophies or about the political background.

We can divide the Czech dissent movement into two main parts. Firstly, there is 'the first wave' of the 'underground' based on the personality of Egon Bondy, then we will talk about 'the second wave' ³⁷ presented mainly by Ivan Martin Jirous and Vaclav Havel. Some of the authors played important roles in both periods as we will learn from the next chapters.

4.1 The First Wave of the Czechoslovakian 'Underground'

The year 1948 for the people in Czechoslovakia meant the beginning of a totalitarian regime, where the human rights were often broken and any opposition prosecuted. There was no room for individual thinking, people were directed and their

³⁷ PILAŘ, MARTIN. *Underground: (kapitoly o českém literárním undergroundu)*. 2002

opinions manipulated in all the aspects of their lives. It was not possible to read what one wanted, it was not possible to listen to the music one liked, everything subordinated to the leading Communist Party under the baton of the Soviet Union. The freedom of the individual was suppressed under the dictate of the superiors to such an extent that all the 'enemies within' were prosecuted. Those who dared to speak, write or even sing against the dictate were put in prison, sentenced to a penal servitude, some were killed and others offered emigration. Their children could not attend the high schools or universities, their families were under the surveillance of their neighbours who could have been forced to cooperate with the regime secret service 'STB'. Madness also reached to the schools, books of the 'western capitalistic authors' were removed from school curriculum and children were being constantly brainwashed by their ideologically clean teachers. All that behaviour was supported by the majority of the Czechoslovaks and had its roots for example in experiences from the betrayal of the West at the beginning of the World War II or the liberation by the Soviet Union.

The first phase of the Czechoslovakian socialism was probably the most brutal epoch of the process of creating a communist zone in Czechoslovakia, where enterprises were nationalized, people controlled and the new generation formed by the strict leading of the Communist Party since the day they were born. The intelligence was leaving the country or being persecuted. Work in uranium mines and death sentences were often used to spread the atmosphere of fear and the docility of the masses was reached. The main resistance consisted of irony and expressions of awkwardness and absurdity of life by those disillusioned by the life in the early communistic country. There were authors like Egon Bondy, Ivo Vodsed'álek, Bohumil Hrabal who started the so called 'first wave of

the Czech underground' in 1950s. The Czech literary underground are typically noted for literary activities connected to 1950s and 1970s. The centres of the underground culture were mainly based in Prague, Most area, Brno and Písek.³⁸

The situation in the early socialistic Czechoslovakia was accurately described by Bondy's typical romantic crudeness in his work *"Total Realism"* from 1951. The mundane reality is served here on the tragic background of the post-war republic subjugated by Soviets. The darkness of the situation is parallel to the narrator's personal life. *"Total Realism"* is supposed to be a poem collection, but it seems to be lacking of any poetic ambitions. Bondy abandoned the verse poetry, the classical forms and gave us the raw delineation of the then reality, unadorned and undebonair:

*"I wanted to remember Marie / but I can't / I wanted to remember
love / but I can't / I wanted to remember the comrade's execution / but the
day is already breaking / and I pointlessly wasted a night / while all that is
gone / and if we actually don't want to die / have to start again."*

...

*"As I am the biggest poet alive / I was thinking about poetry / its only
measure are seconds / I spend in hopelessness."*

...

³⁸

Ibid.

*“It was a congress of the Czechoslovakian Youth Union / Unionists
boys and girls with standards were marching across Prague / Students
carried banners with slogans / Workers build / National Security Forces
protect / At the Old Town Square was the manifestation crowned / With
oration by the President of the Republic / In his speech he stated / We are
heading still forward towards developing socialism in our homeland /
Lead in the manner of our paragon the Soviet Union.”*

...

*“I was reading the news about the high traitors / When you arrived
/ You got undressed after a while / And when I lay down to you / You were
pleasing as you always are / When you left / I finished the article reading
about their execution.”*

...

*“You've just fallen asleep / Perhaps the day is breaking / It could
be the moon / You are lying in my pillows / And by all the Prague's
stations / The trains are coming as every single night / Loaded up with
weapons from the Soviet Union.”*

...

*“Among pigeons above our street / The aeroplane is flying around
/ Which is scattering fliers about / Peace will be won.”*

...

*“I am terribly bored / I am bored even when sleeping / But it's not
boredom from idleness / But because everything is pointless.”*

...

*“The posters covering Prague / Our army / Even our strikers / My
love to Marie / And my hate towards her child / Executions of my friends /
And my powerlessness to leave Prague / Are like my nightmares / And my
frightening boredoms.”*³⁹

Bondy's 'total realism' and feelings of awkwardness come through both waves of the Czech 'underground' as well as descriptions of the intimate moments, often stuffed with vulgarisms, entering later the standards of creation in the 'second wave of the underground'. Typical is outsiderism, bohemianism – ideologies of anarchism, inclination to the physical hedonism, drinking culture, kind of antiliterary pseudoprimitivism and slipping to hermitism and its sadness, desperation and introspectiveness.⁴⁰

On the contrary, the American 'underground' feels more freedom to express their hopes and drives strongly towards the changes of the situation in the state. We do not sense such strong deprivation and hopelessness as is obvious in many Czechoslovakian

³⁹ BONDY, EGON. *Totální realismus. In Básnické dílo Egona Bondyho, sv. 2, básnické sbírky z let 1950-1953.* 1992. Transl. author.

⁴⁰ PILAŘ, MARTIN. *Underground: (kapitoly o českém literárním undergroundu).* 2002

texts from the peak of the 'second culture'. We can assume that it was due to blending the 'main' and 'second culture' which could actually reach the audience and get certain attention and therefore had a better chance to succeed. The American underground decided to fight by very different means, more or less actively, as we can prove for example by Hoffman's manual for revolutionaries "*Steal the book*" described earlier. His manual could actually be very dangerous for the leading garniture if practiced by the majority of Americans. It found exactly those weak points in the legal system to infect it effectively. The Czechoslovakian 'second culture' felt somehow above the ordinary people, we can sense the disgust of the social order, the scorn for the social values, but without an attempt to change the situation for all the society. At least till Havel's prime time. The members of 'underground' were concerned more about their own culture and decided to ignore the surrounding world with a disdainful smile. They could see, that many people had decided to live peaceful lives, without resistance to the main stream 'pushy' culture and change their personal freedom for warm flats and secure jobs.

4.2 The Second Wave of the Czechoslovakian Underground in 1970s

At the beginning of the 'second wave' of the Czechoslovakian 'underground' a release of pressure in the political system was typical and thus a bigger space for making art was created. The typical feature of the Czech culture of that time was the founding of small-scale theaters, where it was possible to listen to the jazz and rock, until that time something unimaginable. Even some books of Anglo-Saxon origin appeared. The 'dissent' and members of the 'underground' were meeting at some kind of secret

intellectual gatherings held particularly in the flat of Jiri and Dana Nemec in the Jecna street in Prague. This was the moment when the lines between the Czech intellectual 'dissent' and rough 'underground' were almost imperceptible.

The 'underground' was now set up against the social conventions and was breaking the social norms by the means of self-presentation, matters of drugs or sex. An admired performer of the Czech 'underground' was Frank Zappa and his group Mother's of invention and Tully Kupfenberg and his band The Fugs. People could not understand the lyrics, as the only languages permitted to learn at schools were the Russian and German (because of east oriented German Democratic Republic), but they revealed the unrestrained energy of the rock music and connected it with the idealized picture of the western world. At that time the Czech 'underground' was knowingly under the influence of the American 'underground'. The loosened borders enabled more travelling and people gained access to the western cultural sources. Young people were so absorbed by the American rock 'n' roll and British rock in the 1960s, that it was almost impossible to control them. In Czechoslovakia many big beat bands started performing at the time and American style of art was smuggled into some local magazines, e.g. *Sešity pro mladou literaturu* (Fascicles for Young Literature), *Výtvarná práce* (Fine Work).⁴¹ and on the 'underground' scene controversial artists appeared like Ivan Martin Jirous and Frantisek Starek. These two artists played key roles in the literary and musical field of the Czech 'underground', Jirous as a poet and the core of the 'second culture' band "*The Plastic People of the Universe*", Frantisek Starek, as a founder of the 'samizdat' magazine

⁴¹ PILAŘ, MARTIN. *Underground: (kapitoly o českém literárním undergroundu)*, 2002.

“Vokno”.⁴² Both, Jirous and Starek had been planning the running of the 'underground' magazine since the middle 1970s. Their activities were interrupted by their imprisonment in connection with the activities of music group “*Plastic People of the Universe*”.

*“We needed a magazine which would breathe with us, lived with us. It must have reflected all that was happening.”*⁴³

The texts of that time were more aggressive and raw. The authors provoked with very unconventional conceptions, they did not consider their writing being an art, but the necessary act for surviving. They call it “*art for people, not for art*”.⁴⁴ Jirous came with the theory of the 'second culture' and set up his own moral and aesthetic principles in “*Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival*” written in 1975, which was by the members of the 'underground' accepted as their dogma.

There were actually two leading texts of the 'second wave' of the Czech 'underground'. Besides the Jirous's work “*Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival*” it was a 'veteran' Egon Bondy and his novel “*Invalid Siblings*“, written in 1974.

“They both expressed their own way in perceiving of the cultural circumstances at the beginning of 'normalization' and their joy rising from the fact, that even in conditions of lacking freedom could exist “merry

⁴² The magazine was founded in 1979, editors of the magazine also published books in samizdat, to the magazine contributed authors like Jirous, Nemcova, Bondy and others.

⁴³ KUDLÁČKOVÁ, LUCIE. *Vybrané samizdatové časopisy posledního desetiletí socialismu*. Brno: 2009: *Rozhovor s Františkem Stárkem*, 11. 4. 2009. Bakalářská práce, 2009. Transl. author.

⁴⁴ PILAŘ, MARTIN. *Underground: (kapitoly o českém literárním undergroundu)*, 2002. Transl. author.

ghetto” in which limited space is possible to think and create relatively freely. However contempt of Bondy's “invalid siblings” by “disables” (defected police) and “orderly citizens” together with Jirous's clear definition of 'second culture' meant beginning of radical refusing of any contact with the establishment (including the physical confrontation). This radical approach, which was a binding element of the underground core, was perceived by its Christian oriented members (as Svatopluk Karasek, Vratislav Brabenec, Ivan Martin Jirous) as an urgency “refusing the devil”.⁴⁵

The 'second wave' artists often used the language of the communist propaganda for their own inspiration. They were emphasizing the nonsense and stupidly transparent manipulation by the propaganda.⁴⁶ *“I simply cannot be singing humbly / feeling all giddy today / just imagine / a SNB⁴⁷ fell for me / not a iota I heed to talk / in the arms of my Security guy / I'll be most safe after all.”* This chastushka⁴⁸ from Pavel Kohout sounds almost as a mocking 'underground' piece of radical art, but at the time the author wrote it, he was zealously for constructive propaganda. Pavel Kohout is actually an author who started his career as a big admirer of the Soviet Union and J.V. Stalin. His disillusion after the Soviet invasion in the summer 1968 led him to the aversion towards the earlier

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Propaganda is an indifferent tool serving as positive as negative means of that one who employs them. (Hemelík Marek, *De Propagando*, p. 4, E-logos, Electronic Journal for Philosophy 2008)

⁴⁷ Member of the national police in Czechoslovakia (National Security Corps)

⁴⁸ a rhymed short Russian song with humorous or ironic context

unreservedly admired system and in 1978 to exile in Austria, where he joined the activities of Czechoslovakian 'samizdat', for its form called 'tam-izdat'⁴⁹.

As a contrast to an absurd concept of the propaganda, 'underground' artists used rough but dreamy concepts and metaphorical means of surrealism. Other authors inclined more to the Egon Bondy's 'total realism, which gave them absolute freedom of expression without necessity to use the scholarly knowledge in writing. We can present here Ivan Martin Jirous's collection written during his imprisonment in 1980's "*Magor's Swan Sonets*":

*"After two suns / the third has raised / without you Bondy all is a waste / without your poetics it would be sad / I would sit here like an ass / just gluing the bags."*⁵⁰

4.3 Egon Bondy and the Free Writing

Egon Bondy was one of the leading figures of the 'first' and also the 'second wave' of the Czech underground. He was a living icon, inspiration for a lot of literary authors of that time, but also the musicians as we can prove just by the name of one LP of the band "*The Plastic People of the Universe*": "*Egon Bondy's Happy Hearts Club Banned*" released in 1974, which includes Bondy's poems from the early 1950s and 1970's. Bondy encouraged many authors to feel free to use unorthodox methods of writing, they freed their minds from all what was expected and left the forms they learned at schools. We

⁴⁹ 'Tam-izdat' ('tam' means in Czech 'there') was a form of 'Samizdat' publishing abroad, books were then smuggled to Czechoslovakia.

⁵⁰ JIROUS, IVAN MARTIN. *Magorovy labutí písňe*. 2006. Transl. author.

can sense anger, sarcasm and irony expressed by the (for 'ordinary' population) shocking combination of romantic features and tough reality. Rough expressions are combined with simple rhymes, texts are introspective to human lives on the very outrageous level. When we talked about the despising of anything 'orderly' or 'sheepish' Bondy in combination with „*Plastic People*“ might be the right example when performing the song “*Along the window*”: “*Along the window the stars are walking / the moon is above me / and your dumb eyes / are shining from the dark / in the air mayflies are flattering / in that dim moonlight / my stomach is aching / as well as my noddle*”⁵¹

We can clearly see here the difference between the mainly artistic Czechoslovakian 'underground' using their main weapon – irony and shocking word combinations. The U.S. 'underground' is somehow more serious about the issue of fighting for a change. The American texts are full of direct assault towards politics of U.S. government, more or less giving the public information which the leading power is trying to suppress. Their aim is to 'open the eyes' of the public, to get 'First Culture' people on their side, to gain the power to be able to make changes so their ideals can come true. In the Czechoslovakian culture it was rather contempt by the 'first culture' principles and fighting for their own cultural space as we can prove by a quotation of Martin Jirous from his text “*A Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival*”:

“The goal of our underground is to create a second culture, a culture completely independent from all official communication media and the conventional hierarchy of value judgments put out by the

⁵¹ BONDY, E., & MACHOVEC, M. *Ve všední den i v neděli--: Výbor z básnického díla 1950-1994*, 2009. Transl. author.

*establishment. It is to be a culture that does not have its goal the destruction of the establishment, because by attempting this, it would - in effect – mean that we would fall into the trap of playing their game. The real aim is to overcome the hopeless feeling that it is of no use to try anything and show that it is possible to do a lot, but not only for those who are willing to act and who ask little for themselves, but instead care a lot for the others.”*⁵²

4.4 Ivan Martin Jirous and the 'Merry Gheto'

Ivan Martin Jirous belongs to the strongest new generation figures of the Czechoslovakia 'underground'. As one of the founders of the music group Plastic “*People of the Universe*”, a leading band of the Czechoslovakian Second Culture, had to face many insults from the side of the socialistic system forces ending in his repetitive imprisonment. He was charmed by Egon Bondy's work and as we mentioned earlier, Bondy participated on the Jirous's project of the “*Plastic People*” providing his poems to set them to music. Jirous, nicknamed 'Magor' ('Looney') by his friends, is also the author of “*A Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival*”, the key document of the Second Wave of the Czechoslovakian Underground movement published, along with his other works like “*Magor's Swan Songs*”, by means of 'samizdat'. Samizdat edition was the only media which was able to secretly and illegally print works of the 'second culture' authors.

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JIROUS, MARTIN. *A Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival*, 1975.

Jirous set up the term 'merry ghetto', another term for the 'underground' and people concentrated around it. When we say 'ghetto' most of us can envision a closed society, from modern times like that of Harlem in USA, or the historical Jewish ghetto, but it would always be a culture within its own bounds, aside the Main stream, living its own culture, having its own rules as Paul Wilson⁵³ saw in the Jirouse's 'merry' one:

*“The Czech musical underground is a ghetto of a particularly modern kind. It is not based on race or religion or class: it is not confined to a geographic entity like an inner city or a separate township. Its inhabitants, and its space, are defined by other criteria – by their rejection of the values of the society around them, by society’s rejection of them, and by their determined affirmation of life within the ghetto.”*⁵⁴

The leading garniture was aware of growing popularity of the 'second-culture' “*Plastic People*” and was strictly dispersing every concert or activity the group participated in: “*We dispersed. Why? Because people decide to go out of their way to hear music they like are similar to the people who in the past trekked up into the mountains to hear a good sermon, except that in our day we have no other choice but to give in to violence.*”⁵⁵

The resistance towards its prosecution culminated by high-numbered marriages of its fans who were trying to keep the music going inviting the musicians to their weddings

⁵³ Canadian musician, 1970-1972 member of the Plastic People of the Universe, he translated into English works of authors like Havel, Hrabal, Skvorecky, he was expelled from the Czechoslovakia in 1972.

⁵⁴ VANICEK, ANNA. *Passion play underground rock music in Czechoslovakia, 1968-1989*, 1998.

⁵⁵ JIROUS, MARTIN. *A Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival*, 1975

as the music background. It might seem ridiculous these days but at the time it was a mark of growing aversion of the mainly young generation to restrictions set by the 'old' socialist government and signals of inevitable changes the government wanted to avoid at any cost. The situation resulted in massive arrests of members of the musical 'underground' in 1976 and the trial with Jirous who was sentenced to 18 months for 'organized disturbance of the peace'. However this might not seem so exceptional, as members of the 'second culture' were kept in prison on a common basis, it was a crucial situation for Czechoslovakia as a country and the act disgusted another important personality of the Czechoslovakian dissent - Vaclav Havel⁵⁶, who was at the founding of Charter 77, a document pointing out human and civil rights abuse in Czechoslovakia:

“UNDENIABLY, the most important political event in Czechoslovakia after the advent of the Husak leadership in 1969 was the appearance of Charter 77. The spiritual and intellectual climate surrounding its appearance, however, was not the product of any immediate political event. That climate was created by the trial of some young musicians associated with a rock group called "The Plastic People of the Universe." Their trial was not a confrontation of two differing political forces or conceptions, but two differing conceptions of life. On the one hand, there was the sterile puritanism of the post-totalitarian establishment and, on the other hand, unknown young people who wanted no more than to be able to live within the truth, to play the music they enjoyed, to sing songs that were relevant to their lives, and to live freely in

⁵⁶

A Czech playwright, author of the Charter 77 and later Czechoslovakian president.

dignity and partnership. These people had no past history of political activity. They were not highly motivated members of the opposition with political ambitions, nor were they former politicians expelled from the power structures. They had been given every opportunity to adapt to the status quo, to accept the principles of living within a lie and thus to enjoy life undisturbed by the authorities. Yet they decided on a different course.”

57

This trial was the moment when Havel intensified his fight for human and civil rights, being disturbed in the then Czechoslovakia and thanks to his connections to the western culture, which adored his plays, even more visible on the international scene. The intervention of the state towards the young musicians lead to establishing the manifest “*Charta 77*”, petition which culminated in the bloodless political change of the country in 1989 known as the 'Velvet Revolution'. None of it would have happened if people had not shown the solidarity and indignation awakened by the absurd trial, as Vaclav Havel pointed out:

“The genesis of Charter 77 also illustrates the special political significance of the moral aspect of things that I have mentioned. Charter 77 would have been unimaginable without that powerful sense of solidarity among widely differing groups, and without the sudden realization that it was impossible to go on waiting any longer, and that the truth had to be spoken loudly and collectively, regardless of the virtual

*certainty of sanctions and the uncertainty of any tangible results in the immediate future.”*⁵⁸

Spreading the text of the “*Charter*” was considered a political crime at the time. The body of the text was built mainly on the Helsinki Accords (a document committing governments to guarantee human rights), and its authors – Vaclav Havel, a philosopher Jan Patočka and the former foreign minister Jiri Hajek⁵⁹, accused the Czechoslovakian government of disturbing its obligations on the field of human and civil rights. The following extracts can underline our description of the then situation:

“Tens thousands of our citizens are prevented from working in their own fields for the sole reason that they hold views differing from official ones...innumerable citizens live in fear of their own, or their children's right to education being withdrawn if they should speak up in accordance with their convictions...no philosophical, political or scientific view or artistic activity that departs ever so slightly from the narrow bounds of official ideology or aesthetics is allowed to be published...further civic rights... are seriously vitiated by the various forms of interference in the private life of citizens exercised by the Ministry of the Interior, for example by bugging telephones and houses,

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ DIJK, R. V. *Encyclopedia of the Cold War*, 2008

*opening mail, following personal movements, searching homes, setting up networks of neighbourhood informers...*⁶⁰

The authors of the "*Charter 77*" in fact are criticizing similar phenomenon as for example American anarchist Abbie Hoffman (in Part II) had to deal with under the American Establishment – snooping, house searches, in Hoffman's case leading to changing of his identity and living apart from his family in the end.⁶¹

When we were talking about philosophical and cultural 'underground' on previous pages, this text, as is obvious, is different, as well as the document we will be talking about later in connection with Vaclav Havel "*The 10 points*". Both documents cannot be considered a piece of art, they have direct political aspect. Until 1977 we could read Bondy's and Jirous's poems, listen to "*Plastic's*" music, but this form of 'underground' was not meant as a political opposition. With Vaclav Havel, Jan Patocka and other Chartists a new era begins, when the 'dissent' starts openly, publicly and internationally attacks the Establishment using legal backup like the Helsinki Accords or the United Nations documents. Vaclav Havel did not hesitate to use his worldwide connections to point at the problems with abiding of human and civil rights practiced by the socialistic government, although we cannot say the Chartists wanted to change the socialistic system to a capitalist one. Their activities were aimed at gaining the freedom of expression and improving the state governing.

⁶⁰ HAVEL, VÁCLAV. *Charter 77 Manifesto*, 1977

⁶¹ See the film "*Steal This Movie!*" about Hoffman's life directed by Robert Greenwald.

The year 1970 had been noted as the year when 'samizdat' was formed as a media in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe enabling communication between 'underground' followers. It was the only way how to publish the texts with politically 'unsuitable content' as it would have been impossible to force it through the official printing media. There was a temptation for the underground artists laid by the manipulative government to join the main stream culture for a cost of lost integrity and probable censorship. There were authors, like Bohumil Hrabal, who started in the 'first wave' of the 'underground', but were defeated probably by the vision of success and better income and joined the 'first culture'. Agreeing with the government's proposal they lost the right to express themselves truly, which actually meant victory for the system.

4.5 Vaclav Havel and his Honesty Concept

By mentioning the “*Charter 77*” earlier we can finally get to the personality of the Czechoslovakian 'dissent' which caused probably the biggest changes in the future arrangement of the Czech lands. Vaclav Havel and his essay “*The Power of the Powerless*” has been quoted in this work many times. The author who, after the Velvet Revolution became the President of the Czech Republic, is well known in the world for his humanistic views and criticism of an authoritative systems in general. The power of his work is based on displaying the decay of society by use of absurd humour, which inspired such authors as Samuel Becket.⁶² He shows us in his plays how the absolutist

⁶² 20th century Irish novelist, playwright and poet Samuel Beckett penned the play “*Waiting for Godot*”. In 1969, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

government gained the power by spreading 'empty phrases' between the masses, which were put under control by a kind of brainwash and was the same system trying to 'free' the people from their own creativity. In his essay *"The Power of the Powerless"* Havel shows how to fight the absolutist system without use of violence and offers analysis of such a system. One of his key ideas here is to live in truth as this is the only possibility to win the battle with the suppressive system:

*"When I speak of living within the truth, I naturally do not have in mind only products of conceptual thought, such as a protest or a letter written by a group of intellectuals. It can be any means by which a person or a group revolts against manipulation: anything from a letter by intellectuals to a workers' strike, from a rock concert to a student demonstration, from refusing to vote in the farcical elections to making an open speech at some official congress, or even a hunger strike, for instance."*⁶³

Living in truth is by Havel's words the most powerful weapon against the garniture which represents the lie. What makes the system stronger is artificial separation of people who show dissatisfaction with the totalitarian system. Such people are left alone and abandoned, becoming part of the dissent, which is by Havel perceived as a defensive movement.⁶⁴

⁶³ HAVEL, VÁCLAV. *The Power of the Powerless*, 1978

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Havel is the author of absurd plays which attack Soviet culture by exaggerating situations the Czech people had to face on a daily basis. Ridiculous situations have a bitter overtone like in his play *“The Memorandum”*, where it is shown how difficult life was for a moral individual in immoral society, which is trying to mechanize behaviour of its members to ensure their absolute uniformity and obedience. The main protagonist held the monologue in the end of the play:

*“Never before has Man lived projected so near to the very brink of the soluble conflict between the subjective will of his moral self and the objective possibility of its ethical realization. Manipulated, automatized, made into a fetish, Man loses the experience of his own totality; horrified, he stares as a stranger at himself, unable not to be what he is not, nor to be what he is.”*⁶⁵

The atmosphere of manipulation and 'grey zone' collaboration was theorized in the seminal essay *“The Power of the Powerless”* from 1978. We cited the work many times and we should not forget to highlight Havel's humanity and understanding even for people collaborating with the system. He well understood and did not moralize when it came to collaborators from the ranks of 'underground' members. There was no blame to those who under the threats or for hope of own profits betrayed the 'culture'.

Vaclav Havel fully joined the Czechoslovakian 'underground' after the 1968 Occupation by Soviet forces when together with Ludvik Vaculik, Karel Kyncl and other

⁶⁵ HAVEL, VÁCLAV. *The Memorandum* (1966), transl. by Vera Blackwell, in *The Garden Party and Other Plays*, 1993.

personalities of the Czechoslovakian intelligence and politics signed *“The 10 points”*, a document addressed to the then Federal government. The document criticized for example the Soviet invasion, appealed to start negotiations about the departure of Soviet soldiers from our lands, to cancel the censorship, to stop banning the organization Society for human Rights (Spolecnost pro lidska prava) or stretched out the lack of qualified activities towards dealing with economic crises. This document by its structure and themes involved actually resembles the SDS document *“Port Huron Statement”*. They both point out the shortcomings of both ruling garnitures, Czechoslovakian and American, they both touch economic, social and political issues. The difference lies in the addressee. The document *“The 10 points”* was intended for the Czechoslovakian government while *“The Port Huron Statement”* for the American, mainly ‘underground’ public. *“Huron Statement”* says this about politics:

*“...American politics are built on a desire to deploy and neutralize the 'evil drives' of men. Politics today are organized for policy paralysis and minority domination, not for fluid change and mass participation.”*⁶⁶

The economic situation is described in *“The 10 points”* as follows: *“We are asking though to issue the law on a socialistic enterprise which would enable special cadres decide about production with respect to the state plane and which would give labour force rights to influence distribution and investment.”*⁶⁷

⁶⁶ HAYDEN, TOM, & HABER ROBERT ALAN. *Port Huron Statement*. 1962.

⁶⁷ VACULÍK, LUDVÍK. *Nepaměti: (1969-1972)*. 1998.

It seems that both documents asked for the same thing – using common sense, giving citizens more power in economic even political issues and to stop the money-oriented and docility-demanding attitude of both Establishments.

4.6 Tightening the Grip at Gustav Husak's Governing

After the Soviet intervention in 1968, Gustav Husak was appointed as the Czechoslovakian president and conscientiously started to fulfil the Soviet vision of governing. Husak, who was in the 1950s processes almost sentenced to death (only the continuous changing of his statements probably saved his life) and after his rehabilitation, in Spring 1968 figured as one of the main reformers of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party after meeting in Moscow in 1968 totally changed his ideology and became a servant of Leonid Breznev, the Soviet president. Husak started the so called process of 'normalization', which meant massive personnel cleansing and tightening the prosecution of everyone who would dare to stand against the Establishment or at least did not want to cooperate with his system.⁶⁸ The series of imprisonments, repressions took place and a lot of 'underground' members were repeatedly imprisoned, some of them decided to accept the possibility of emigration to the western countries. For the political system it meant to divest itself of troublesome personalities. These acts had the expected devastating impact on Jirous's 'merry ghetto'.

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FORMÁČKOVÁ, MARIE. V hlavní roli Gustáv Husák, 2009

One of the young performers, who was by the permanent mental terror of the normalization pushed to emigration was Milan Kohout. His specialization was poetry, film but mainly performing art. His book released later, in 2011, can help us to understand the soul of the artist of that time by the introspective view into his life in the communist era since 1960s till early 1980s, when he left with the idea of a better life in America.

The pressure of the normalization was increasing in late 1970s as the socialistic government felt that something unstoppable had started. There were many festivals of 'underground' art⁶⁹ and big beat concerts organized, where people were, similarly to those in America, getting arrested in big numbers, exemplary punished or mass beaten by the police forces to warn the young generation against joining such events. In Kohout's work we can observe the situation in Czechoslovakia through his eyes as a young and relatively innocent man through the time when he was leaving the rotten socialistic republic with the hope of a better and free life in the capitalistic West, and finally his disillusionment when the true face of the life in the West was revealed.

The enthusiasm of the author and his determination to cause as much trouble to the system as possible when he actively joined the 'second culture' as well as his groping in the dark in search for the answers to what is the right substance of human being was depicted in his book, mentioned above, as follows:

⁶⁹ Postupice in 1974 ("Hannibal's Wedding"), Bojanovice in 1976 ("Magor's Wedding"). Havel's farmhouse in Hrádeček in 1977.

“Finally, from the endless reading I feel that people haven't come up with anything crucial and each of the celebrated thinkers is only assuming something undefined, searching and groping in the dark. And that who believes that he finally knows, knows the holy shit... Slowly I start to understand how good it is that I don't understand anything from the big ideas, because in the life of the 'second culture', as Jirous called our Czech underground, it is impossible to anchor anything, to orderly put it in the boxes and classify it. Because we got into the space of the 'second freedom' where non conformism or moral code is to find and everything is being built again, right from the basement. We are prehistorically free and instinctively unchained... We are laughing at their money, possession, statuses in the pyramids of power, their elitism and classes, their thought self-control, their escape from authenticity of life, their never ending compromises resulting from necessity and even their language they misused for building a gigantic monster of lies which they force to themselves as cathedrals of the truth.”⁷⁰

Being dragged to never ending interrogations, extorted by pressure on him and his family members he felt so drained and hopeless he left Czechoslovakia, forced as one of the signatories of “Charta 77” by the Czech secret services STB, with a hope of better life elsewhere, preferably in dreamt-of America. He was not the only one and in leaving the country we can sense the desperation but also naivety in which the Czech 'underground' idealized the American system seen as the one of absolute freedom, chance for everyone,

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KOHOUT, MILAN. *Proved' vola světem, volem zůstane*, 2010

about which only very few had true information. His arrival in Boston and the first impression was a shock:

*The street is silent today / and the heat is calm too / and the tattooed white hand slowly closes the door of the white cadillac / because the baseball bats lay peacefully on the desk of Mr inspector / and the blood is clotting in the muscle of a little Vietnam boy slowly into a big bruise / Insane light of the police car has already placidly died in the Universe and buzzing of the raging crowd is not on the list of the most terrible sounds in the world / - I already know! / And I also know / that the street is now already calm...*⁷¹

Shocked and disappointed Kohout continued in his underground happenings in Boston, where he studied and then started teaching art at the TUFTS University. He has been determined to wake up Americans in a hope that they would spurn the omnipresent consumerism and the mechanical behaviour. The theme of mechanization of the culture seems to be similar to Havel's vision in the era of the Czechoslovakian 'underground'. People in both countries were put under similar pressure, or let me use the word 'form'. Uniformity of masses seems to be a strong means for general obedience, whether it was in the former Czechoslovakia, USA, or elsewhere in the world. We also have to say that sort of manipulation and governing which was common in Czechoslovakia would be too much even for America. We are pointing out things, which were possible to see in America in a certain amount but were in Czechoslovakia intensified by immense fear

⁷¹ Ibid.

about individual existence. In America there was the possibility to feel relatively free, even though it could be on behalf of one's well-being and in contrast with Havel's 'honesty'.

The persecution of the Czech 'underground' in 1970s and 1980s caused an emigration wave, mainly of young people. The conditions of the underground communities are in a very rough manner described in a novel of Jan Pelc “...a bude hůř” (Kolin nad Rynem 1985, Praha 1990). The author uses for 'normalized' people shocking language and explicit scenes from the life of the young Czech 'underground' generation. The life of the main character Olin is reduced to drinking and having sex with women around him. Similar crudeness is possible to find in Milan Kohout's poems, performances, films and his retrospective book “*Proved vola svetem, volem zustane*”. Kohout's concept differs in a number of roughly realistic romance passages. All his work is set up on absurd situations life was offering and he, as a young man can spot the beauty and poetics through the dark before he is thrown into the vortex of another nonsense, another absurdity.

We can clearly see that there are similarities in perceiving of the 'rough reality', but also diametric differences. Is it the indolence or ignorance towards the nonsense in the system which makes 'the ordinary' people tolerate the obvious absurdities? Is it so dangerous to see things clearly without the preset values? It is obviously still disturbing to see the truth, even in the modern systems of democracy, which are actually still watching 'the enemies within' as shown in another piece of Kohout's work where it is

shown what happens when a little more critical words towards the American ways are used than is tolerated:

*“...everyone was wagging their hands and I suddenly realized that outside, behind the glass, there is an oversized strange looking man standing, with a coat over his arm gazing at me. That moment I was back in time in Bohemia, where I could see the same stare of the comrades, who were on the watch to detect anyone who would try to undermine their socialism from the underground.”*⁷²

⁷²

Ibid.

5 CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters we have tried to discover the differences between two diametrically distinct countries, not only by their size but also the culture. We were trying to trace similarities between the texts presented here and provide a sizeable amount of extracts of the authentic texts for maintaining the spirit of each of them as we believe that the quality of the work would suffer if we tried to only paraphrase them. Each of the text has a special energy which we wanted to preserve and transmit it to the reader without any changes in meaning to provide basic information and give the reader opportunity for his, or her, own creative thinking.

We could see that some features of both 'underground' movements were very close and others interpreted in a very different way. Let me sum up the previous chapters and offer a more compact and clear picture of the stated issues.

The Czechoslovakian underground's resistance consisted mainly of ignoring the system, in denying the socially set standards and criticizing the communist government by means of literature, music and art. At least till the "*Charter 77*" was written. The Czechoslovakian underground joined intelligence of all levels and their strategy was fighting the system in non-violent way. It was not primarily a political fight, it was a fight for freedom of existence in general. We can talk here about freedom to read, freedom to listen to the music and freedom to create, but also meeting friends as being about the most natural issues of life. All these activities were considered a danger for the socialist government of that time in the moment it differed from the cultural dictate of the Czechoslovakian communist authorities. Everyone who tried to be different was

prosecuted and excluded from 'decent' society. The word decent is very important for the Czechoslovakian underground as we could see in the previous chapters, the 'undergrounders' tried to be as 'indecent' as possible to distinguish from the false 'morality' of the manipulated masses. They were shouting out their frustration using the roughness in music, vulgarisms in poems and prose. Adequate forms were found in 'surrealism' (Egon Bondy), mainly in the 'first wave' of the Czech underground, 'total realism' in the second wave (Egon Bondy) and 'explosionism', specifically used by Vladimir Boudnik in 1950s. The 'undergrounders' were pushed to the very edge of society in an attempt to separate the healthy (understand “correctly”) thinking society from the metaphorical 'rotten fruit'. Those who joined the movement worked at the most dirty professions, or could not work at all relying on the charity of their co dissenters. We can mention Egon Bondy, who shortly worked as a night watch at the museum and then spent the rest of his life on invalidity benefits or an art historian Martin Jirous, who despite of his university degree could only get a job as a gardener or a night watchman (nothing personal against these professions, but we would expect art historians to have a more glamorous job).

In the Czechoslovakian underground and dissent we can counterpoint the horizontal system of communication, where people communicate directly without using any technological means, against the U.S. vertical system of communication with wide use of media without the direct contact. According to Milan Kohout who presented this theory in his performance *“Flying and Flowing”* with David Franklin (both from the experimental art center Mobius) in horizontal system

*“people communicate with each other on a human scale, looking into each other's eyes and listening to each other's voices. This horizontal communication within a society means that this type of society is based on collectivism, which is probably the most ancient version of society.” On the contrary, the American verticality means individualism where people started to exploit each other more; therefore they could afford to be individuals...They do not really communicate on a human scale.”*⁷³

The Czechoslovakian dissent and underground movement could not publish any of its work legally. For this reason the 'samizdat' edition was established which helped with spreading the texts between its members. The collectivist socialist garniture was permanently trying to destabilize the 'underground' core by means of legal punishment, dispersing the Underground meetings using the police forces, but also the 'sweet' way using offers to publish on condition of censoring the text or music. A lot of authors yielded to such a temptation and joined the main stream for a cost of certain changes of their works to gain money and fame, the others did not stop trying in the hope of future changes as we could read in the Martin Jirous text shown earlier in Chapter 2.

The same practices are visible in the American scheme. How many authors from the American 'underground' throw away their honest principles to join the main stream and in that moment lose their sharpness by being rocked to sleep by the rustling of the notes helping the government to maintain its power? The underground culture in America

⁷³ KOHOUT MILAN, FRANKLIN DAVID. *Spacial Relations Speak the Language of Social Hierarchy*, 2014

very often infected a mainstream culture, which is something unthinkable in the field of the Czechoslovakian underground.

The Czechoslovakian underground was actually the pure art, only later accomplished by political resistance of signatories of Charter 77. All the key figures were active as writers, musicians, philosophers or painters. They insisted on peacefully reached changes instead of violent solution, so often performed by the U.S. underground. This philosophy is well stated by Milan Kohout: *"When something goes wrong in society, art is the most powerful tool for expressing those concerns about social ills and the decay of societal ethics."*⁷⁴

On the contrary, the American underground often used power for reaching their goals, as they maintain the idea that evil should be fought by means of other evil. The exception could be Martin Luther King, but even here we have to consider the question how much were his activities connected to the American 'underground' and to which extent they flow with the main stream. I dare to say here that this would be one of the major differences between the two types of 'underground' movements, Czechoslovakian and American. The borders between the First and Second culture in the former Czechoslovakia were sharp. A man could be a part of the First Culture OR a part of the Second Culture. Any blending was impossible. The borders of the American First Culture and the Second Culture were blurry and we can see a certain fluctuation of 'undergrounders' between them. The American culture was definitely more driven by money and the unequal distribution of capital, while the trends in the socialistic

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Ibid.

Czechoslovakia were to make people more or less equal, so we cannot see there such differences in possession between common people.

Also feminism, so strong in America in the 1980s, did not affect the Czechoslovakian lands so intensively as in the USA. Why, we could ask. The answer is obvious. With the collectivization of properties in the post-war Czechoslovakia all the social differences were de facto erased, including the differences in rights of men and women. That was probably the most positive deed in favour of then political system. The Czech women were presented as strong builders of socialism confidently managing all the male professions as well as their households. Women in America had to fight for their rights to vote and to live their life in dignity by the means of feminist movements. Their role in the American society was as housewives whose main reason for existence was to care about their precious and hardworking husbands. According to Nancy Frazer the women in America were being constantly abused as a buying power, manipulated into the role of saviours of the American economy. The theme of feminism was a motive for the satirical thriller, book and later even film, "The Stepford Wives"⁷⁵ written by Ira Levin in 1972. After that the term 'Stepford Wife' has been used as a reference to a subordinated and docile woman, so typical for the post war America.

The phenomenon of the Underground movements in America are plentifully pictured in a number of books and films, which can emotionally influence the viewers and to attract them here to the side of the Underground, of the political powers evoking

⁷⁵ A horror story about a woman who comes to small American town, where all the wives are the same – they do not work and their only interest is caring about their husbands and children. After some time she finds out, to her horror, that all the women were 'robotized' by their husbands.

mainly the governmental attempts for clarifying their 'purposeful' activities. There exist a great amount of movements we did not mention here from environmental activists to street artists and performers, but I believe the main ideas of such movements are not too distant from the ideas of the main underground activists which consist primarily of humanity, equality of human beings, the rights on living in dignity and the most important and so much desired freedom as the word 'freedom' can cover all the attempts of the activism and give reason to all the defensive fights against oppression of any scale anywhere in the world. We can hope and try to make the world a better place for anyone without any race or gender discrimination.

*“Above all, any existential revolution should provide hope of a moral reconstitution of society, which means a radical renewal of the relationship of human beings to what I have called the "human order," which no political order can replace. A new experience of being, a renewed rootedness in the universe, a newly grasped sense of higher responsibility, a newfound inner relationship to other people and to the human community—these factors clearly indicate the direction in which we must go.”*⁷⁶

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HAVEL, VÁCLAV. *The Power of the Powerless*, 1978

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7 ABSTRACT

This work is devoted to clarifying differences and similarities between the American and Czechoslovakian ‘underground’ movements dated to mainly 1960s and 1970s by comparing key text documents characteristic for both cultures. Analyses of these documents supplemented by numerous quotations are accompanied by the illustration of the then political and cultural environment.

8 RESUME

Cílem této práce bylo srovnat československý 'dissent' s americkým 'undergroundem' zejména v dobu nejintenzivnější rezistence v šedesátých a sedmdesátých letech 20. století. Byly citovány různorodé texty, které byly pro dané období a zemi charakteristické. Za americký 'underground' lze zmínit základní dokumenty 'undergroundového' hnutí, jako "*Port Huron Statement*" ("*Port Huronský manifest*"), populární kniha anarchisty Abbieho Hoffmana "*Steal this Book*" ("*Ukradni tuhle knihu*") nebo kniha Betty Friedan "*The Feminine Mystique*" ("*Mystika ženství*"). Na straně druhé, za československý 'dissent' můžeme jmenovat dílo Egona Bondyho "*Invalidní sourozenci*" ("*Invalid Siblings*"), Václava Havla "*Moc bezmocných*" ("*The Power of the Powerless*"), Martina Jirouse "*Zpráva o třetím hudebním obrození*" (*A Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival*) nebo Milana Kohouta "*Proved' vola světem volem zůstane*".

Zároveň bylo třeba objasnit, na jakém společenském a politickém pozadí takové texty vznikaly, bylo tedy nutné čerpat z historických pramenů a dalších textů, které dané období charakterizují, jako například Pilařova kniha "*Underground: (kapitoly o Českém literárním undergroundu)*" nebo Burtonova "*The George Jackson Brigade and the Anticapitalist Underground of the 1970s*".

V rámci celé práce jsou předloženy ukázky textů 'undergroundových' autorů v takovém rozsahu, aby bylo možné zachytit atmosféru období šedesátých a sedmdesátých let a poskytnout tak ucelený obraz toho, co se tehdy na americké a československé

kulturní a politické scéně odehrávalo a jakým způsobem se ‘druhá kultura’ snažila změnit svět.